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Chapter 5 – Philosophers/Schools of Thought

After reading Chapter 5 in FAE, I found that there were some educational philosophers/schools of thought that matched my own feelings about schooling. The schools of philosophy that I agree with are progressivism, humanism, and constructivism. These schools of thought are “Student Centered” as opposed to “Teacher Centered”. Progressivism is a “philosophy that emphasizes that ideas should be tested by experimentation and that learning is rooted in questions developed by the learner” and believes that emphasis should be placed on how to think as opposed to what to think (Johnson et al., p. 114). Humanism is a “philosophy that contends that humans are innately good – that they are born free but become enslaved by institutions” and believes that the learning process should be centered on the student’s individual feelings (Johnson et al., p. 115). Constructivism is a “philosophy that emphasizes hands-on, activity-based teaching and learning during which students develop their own frames of thought” and believes that students should formulate their own ideas and understand the “big picture” instead of memorizing facts (Johnson et al., p. 117).

I agree with these schools of thought because I think that students should be the main focus in the classroom and the curriculum/classroom instruction should be modified around the students. I believe teachers should create situations where students are able to think critically by themselves and share their individual opinions and skills. Classroom learning really is a group effort between the students and the teachers and I think that that relationship should not be one-sided. As mentioned in FAE, the “Student Centered” philosophies have “Equal teacher and learner control” and that in the classroom, there is “Considerably less teacher talk, more learner talk; discovery-based learning” (Johnson et al., p. 119). Although I think that “Teacher Centered” philosophies have both positives and negatives, I think that students should have more of a voice in the classroom and that the classroom organization should be more flexible and less rigid. I think that it is important to foster the individual opinions and thoughts of each student and in my internship experience at an elementary school last year; I was able to see that the classroom organization, at least at that particular school, was very organized and rigid. I think that organization is important but I think that there needs to be some middle-ground between strictly “Teacher Centered” philosophies and “Student Centered Philosophies”.